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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SECURITY INFORMATION

**INFORMATION REPORT**REPORT NO. 

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COUNTRY USSR (Ukrainian SSR)

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SUBJECT Living Conditions of the German Group at Arsenal  
No. 1 in Kiev

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(LISTED BELOW)PLACE  
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- 25X1 1. The house in which our German group lived  25X1X  
 was shared with Soviets. The German part of the house was separated from the Soviet part by metal partitions, and we also had a separate entrance. Only one Soviet lived on the German side of the house. He was obviously employed to observe the movements of the German inhabitants. He was a fanatical Communist and took every occasion to insult the Germans.
2. Mail was not delivered to our house. Every day, one of our group had to go to the post office to pick it up. There was a store in the block where our house was located, but it was not very well stocked, and we did not like to buy there. Other stores could only be visited at certain hours and on certain days, and visits had to be made with the accompaniment of one or more interpreters. (Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 to 11 o'clock in the morning).
3. The only walk we could take without our interpreters was between our house and the arsenal. At the entrance gate of the arsenal, we had to gather and wait until two guards escorted each member of the entire group to his respective work station. The same procedure was repeated at night, when we had to wait in the yard of the arsenal until all German specialists had

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assembled to be escorted out of the plant.

4. We had to pay for our living quarters. Therefore, the members who had high salaries got the larger apartments. In addition to rent, we paid bills for light, gas, water and heat. Families living in more than one room were obliged to take in one of the bachelors as a "lodger" and to permit him the use of their kitchen.
5. When we arrived in Kiev, our cameras were taken from us. The possession of a camera was forbidden, and violations were severely punished. We were also forbidden to have radios, and those we brought with us from Germany were taken away. However, after about one year (late in 1947 or early in 1948), our radios were restored to us. At the time of our departure, our cameras were also handed back to us, much to our surprise.
6. As far as we could find out, we were paid an average of 600-800 rubles less than other German groups in the USSR. [redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] I was paid 1800 rubles per month, of which 1600 was actually paid and 200 was withheld for taxes. It was hard to live on this salary with a wife and two children. We were not paid for overtime, although we worked overtime almost every night after the 15th of the month, sometimes until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. We did not get premiums for the fulfillment of a plan or for over-fulfillment of a quota because our work was credited to the Soviet employees. A number of German specialists worked as informers for the MVD, because being an informer entailed an increase in normal pay, plus an occasional premium for especially good information. People who refused to cooperate with the MVD had their salaries cut. Professor Schorsch, for instance, who had apparently displeased the MVD in some manner, had his salary reduced from 6000 rubles to 2500 rubles, although he was considered the foremost expert on optical instruments in the German group.
7. A large number of our group was suspected of being informers for the MVD. Frequently, German specialists were called either to the "employment office" or to the "dentist", both of which were cover names for the MVD. While such calls were generally delivered with some discretion, they were at other times shouted out to alert the other German specialists to the fact that there were informers among them. Obviously, the Soviets had a carefully worked out plan to arouse among the Germans a suspicion of everybody against everybody else. They succeeded in this design completely. The German group did not meet socially during the last two years of their stay in Kiev, they did not celebrate the holidays together, nor did they meet for cultural or recreational enterprises. They stayed at their homes in the evenings, huddled around the radio (which was barely audible for more than 1-2 m from the receiving set--everybody listening to RIAS-Berlin). Living in this manner for two years is nerve-shattering, and many of us suffered severe nervous disorders or heart diseases. [redacted] 25X1X
8. The German group was split into two factions. The leader of the collaborators with the Soviets was instruction engineer Fritz Buhndang. He had, as far as I know, complete freedom of movement in Kiev, and was frequently out on missions, such as observing the 1 May celebration and writing favorable descriptions of the parades and processions for the German papers. He was on good terms with the Soviets and spent many evenings in their midst. His frequent guests were the interpreters and the teachers of the German school.

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9. As far as I know, Röhrdanz had been, during the Nazi time, either an army officer or a party worker. When the Soviets took over the eastern part of Germany, Röhrdanz was sent from the Zeiss plant to Berlin, where he went to school for 9 months. He came back as a vociferous communist, and he was instrumental in organizing the SED and Antifa (Anti-Fascist League) in Kiev. After his return to Germany, he continued his propaganda for Soviet-German friendship.
10. When the Soviet loan for the promotion of peace was introduced, all workers were forced to give up one month's salary for the cause. The "loan" was withheld every month from the salary check of the worker. The Germans were not requested to collaborate in this loan, but Röhrdanz volunteered to pay his share and urged the other Germans to follow his example. His sacrifice, however, was not so great since he received an increase in salary immediately after he had volunteered for the loan. I do not know if any other Germans signed up for the loan; possibly Körner was also a contributor.
11. Construction engineer Paul Kiessling was the friend and confidant of Röhrdanz, and was nicknamed "Adjutant". He kept pictures of Lenin, Stalin, and the highest official of the Ukraine in his room. All these pictures were adorned with red flags. He also wrote articles in German papers, and sent them pictures of life in the USSR. He collaborated with Röhrdanz in some of his missions, one of which has stuck in my mind. Röhrdanz sent to the German papers a report of a German movie which was shown in Kiev. Behind him sat a Soviet boy, who, spotting Röhrdanz as a German, said in broken German, "Uncle, how nice, how nice". The story is essentially true, except that the boy was not a Soviet, but the son of Kiessling.
- 25X1X 12. [redacted]  
Late in 1948, an anonymous letter from Jena arrived in Kiev, in which his entire life history was discussed and he was accused of being hostile to the Soviet system of government and of being a fascist. [redacted] was shown the handwritten letter and recognized the handwriting of Mrs. Röhrdanz. After many weeks of denying the charge, Mrs Röhrdanz suffered a nervous breakdown and confessed to having written the letter.
- 25X1X 13. Listening to foreign broadcasts was forbidden. We were sure that one item the informers had to report about was the radio programs which the various families listened to in the evening. To a certain extent, however, the system of informing broke down over this item. Everybody listened to RIAS, Berlin, even if they had to do it in the deepest secrecy. Everybody knew that everybody else did the same, but only Röhrdanz was at liberty to talk, since he listened in order to refute the lies it spread. It was not easy to face Röhrdanz when he was misquoting RIAS and not to contradict him, but any contradiction would have revealed that we had listened to RIAS too. We might have suffered very much, if the fact of our listening had been thus confirmed.
- 25X1X 14. When the German specialists got sick, they had to notify the foreman [redacted] that they wanted to go on sick call, and during this period they were paid only half of their salary. We were sent to the plant dispensary for examination. The plant dispensary was in close touch with the production departments and would refuse to pronounce a man sick when the monthly quota was in danger of not being fulfilled. Of course, we could stay away from work completely, but we would have lost all our pay for the period of our absence,

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I, for one, could not afford any loss of pay.

15. As early as November 1946, some of the German specialists began to write letters to official places, concerning our deportation. The first two letters obviously did not reach the office to which they were directed. Instead, some of us were called to the manager of the plant, and he asked us about our intentions in writing the letters and took them out of his desk drawer. But we continued our letter writing, and found that they actually reached the people to whom they were addressed. 25X1X 25X1X

sons and organizations; Pieck, Grotewohl, Stalin, Givernik, the Soviet Minister under whose jurisdiction Arsenal No. 1 was operating, the SED party, the German Union, and the German Embassy. We got answers from all places, after a long delay. All had approximately the same text: that the person or office was acting on our behalf, and that we would be informed as soon as they had more detailed knowledge of our cases.

16. We did not complain in our letters about the deportation, about our situation in a foreign country, or about the treatment we were given, but rather about our worries that the children would not receive adequate schooling, about cases of acute homesickness, about the health of our women, and about our worry over conditions at home. We cited the cases of men in poor health, of men who suffered from the climate, of men who were too old to withstand the work in the plant. 25X1X

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17. All in all, I estimate the number of letters we wrote to be about twenty. While the first letters were written by the five members of the "writing committee", we later had meetings of all Germans to choose the correct and diplomatic phrasing for the letters and to have our rough drafts changed and edited the way the group wanted. The letters then were signed by all Germans, but there were always some 6-8 persons who refused to sign. We sent the letters through the plant management, which also had the right of censoring the letters. A few of our letters were sent through a Soviet middleman, who posted them at the railroad station. 25X1

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19. Theft was a daily occurrence in the plant. The employees of the plant stole everything they could lay a hand on. Frequently they took entire instruments out of the plant, such as micrometers,

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depth measuring instruments, and boring machines. The guards frequently helped them when they were promised alcohol.

20. A particularly favorite trick of the employees was to take the component parts of a Contax camera and build a camera with them. The cameras which were made in this manner sold for 4,000 rubles. The most prized part of a Contax camera was not the lense, but the trade-mark "Contax". With this label, one could sell his camera as the genuine article and get as much as 6,000 rubles.

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